



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Working through partnerships to restore and protect fish and wildlife habitat on private lands

Stewardship. Partnership. Fish and wildlife. Future generations. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Partners for Fish and Wildlife (Partners) Program embraces each of these themes. It's about working together in a voluntary pro-active manner with private landowners to restore and enhance fish and wildlife habitat. It's about sharing resources of time, labor, and funds to help ensure that elements of our common heritage—wildlife, fish, and a healthy ecosystem—will be there for our kids, and their kids.



The Partners Program focuses on improving habitat for federal trust resources: migratory birds, federally-listed endangered or threatened species, and interjurisdictional fish. In Michigan, restoration of wetlands has been, and remains, the primary focus for the Partners Program. The program also includes restoration of grasslands, streams (both in the channel and within the riparian corridor), and specific habitats used by federally-listed endangered or threatened species. Since this program began in Michigan in 1988, more than 1,500 projects have been completed. Cooperators include, but are not limited to, Ducks Unlimited, Michigan RC&D offices, Natural Resource Conservation Service, Conservation Districts, and the State of Michigan.

Wetland Restoration



Wetland restorations are generally focused where previous agricultural drainage provides an opportunity to restore hydrology, or put the "wet" back into altered wetlands. Projects often involve breaking or plugging a portion of a tile line, blocking a ditch, or building a low dike or embankment. Restorations are designed to re-establish shallow-water wetlands (depth of three feet or less) containing a mixture of open water and vegetated areas. The program does not create farm ponds or "pushouts", and does not alter existing natural, undisturbed wetlands.

Stream Habitat Improvements

Efforts are underway to stabilize streambanks and improve road crossings in northern Michigan watersheds that support resident species such as brook trout and Great Lakes migratory species. The objective is to reduce sediment entering rivers and streams by stopping it at its source. Sediment smothers fish eggs and fills in pools that fish use for feeding and shelter. Projects also focus on removing obstacles such as dams and culverts that block fish passage. Stream improvement projects in Michigan are considered on a case-by-case basis.



Grassland Projects

Grassland habitat provides a buffer around wetland areas and nesting cover for some waterfowl and a number of declining grassland birds such as bobolinks. The Partners Program is working with others in Michigan's agricultural counties to promote the establishment of mixed stands of warm-season grasses and native wildflowers. Grasslands 20 to 40 acres in size, and larger, help provide adequate cover and food throughout the year for a variety of migratory birds, pheasants, and other wildlife.



Habitat for Endangered Species

Partners efforts are expanding to remove invasive species in sensitive habitats supporting threatened or endangered species. For example, glossy buckthorn is being removed from wetland fens to benefit the Mitchell's satyr butterfly. These projects are considered on a case-by-case basis.

Cost and Commitment



The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service funds projects with cost-share assistance provided by Ducks Unlimited, other conservation organizations and government agencies, and landowners. Project construction is often completed with little or no cost to the landowner. Many landowners do contribute funds for permits or construction and in-kind services such as labor to prepare seedbeds and seed disturbed areas. Landowners are required to sign an

agreement to preserve the project on their property for a minimum of 10 years. Longer agreements are encouraged. Landowners are also responsible for project maintenance.

For more information about the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program

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“ Working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.”